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CURBSTONE MOSSES.

CORA H. CLARKE.

Having lately made an interesting discovery on a curbstone, I would suggest to those Chapter members who live in cities to examine the curbstones in the side streets, or those a little out of town where they are not too vigorously scraped and cleaned.

In the city of Meadville, Penn., where I have passed the winter, the moss-gathering capacity of the curbstones is sadly interferred with by the regrettable custom of raking up the autumn leaves and making bonfires of them, close to the sidewalks, whereby the mosses growing on the side of the curbstone are singed, blackened, or wholly killed, and sometimes the fire creeps through under a board walk, and destroys mosses growing on the stone base of an iron fence. I have such a piece of stone work in my mind, where I have found at different times a fruiting Amblystegium varium, two or three species of Bryum, Weisia viridula, Ceratodon, a Barbula, and Funaria hygrometrica.

In the part of the town where I stay, there is an edging of grass between the flagging and the curbstone, and the proximity of the grass seems favorable for the growth of mosses on both the top and the side of the curbstone. Funaria is the commonest species, and now, May 18, is very pretty, with its green cranes'-heads. Bryum argenteum is tolerably common, and some other Bryums, of which the heads are green still, with Ceratodon, and sundry pleurocarps which are not in fruit.

But the richest harvest of moss I found on the next street, on a curbstone facing north, and partly shaded by trees. The stone seems to be a sort of slate, but perhaps a little too smooth for the adherence of the mosses, for in many places they were lying in the gutter in a roll that had peeled off the curb. Where they were still attached, they looked like a solid green cushion, covering the whole side of the curbstone, and I was surprised to find them nearly all acrocarpus mosses. The silvery foliage of Bryum argenteum seemed quite concealed in the green growth, but the tiny bells hung here and there: the other Bryums sent up their needles—also Ceratodon; the Funarias showed both old brown capsules, and young shoots. It is my experience that in mosses, when the ripe fruit has shed its lids, the fruit of the next year begins to show the silvery sheen of its caps.

Patches of Barbula unguiculata grew here and there; most of the lids were gone at this date, April 18th, but the red peristome was in good condition. But my most interesting species was one that as I have hinted was new to me: here and there my eye was caught by a red gleam, which close inspection showed to be caused by tiny red capsules, each on a very short seta, and all the wee heads looking one way—a few still bore the lids, but most of them showed the red peristome. It was evidently a *Dicranella* and I have made it out to be *Dicranella varia*, a species which I never happened to find before, although I have some specimens in my herbarium.

In the hope that others may find species of equal interest to them on the curbstones to which they have access, I send this account of my experience.

Boston, Mass.